(c) Government is also contemplating to improve the medical cover to ex-servicemen and their dependents.

Termination of lease of Defence land to Madras Diocesan Trust Association and YMCA

2451. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minster of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that defence land measuring 4.25 acres and buildings thereon were leased to Madras Dioceasan Trust Association in 1931 and one of the building was permitted for use by YMCA;

(b) whether the Ministry hired a part of the same building from YMCA in 1975 for office of MES formation on a monthly rent of Rs. 1345 which was enhanced to Rs. 5500 per month without checking its ownership; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken to terminate the lease and recover the payment?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Defence land measuring 4.25 acres and not the buildings in Survey No. 345 in Wellington Cantonment was given on lease to Madras Diocesan Trust Association in 1931. The buildings on that land have been constructed by the lessee and are private property. A portion of the building is on hire with defence since 1974 at a rent of Rs. 1345/- per month. The rent was revised to Rs. 5,500/- in 1999, but the revised rent has not been paid so far due to ownership dispute.

Military Cooperation with Russia

2452. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Russian Deputy Prime Minister has recently visited India and reached agreements in military cooperation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have decided to procure figher planes from Russia; and

(d) if so, the terms and conditions laid down for such procurement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Russian Deputy Prime Minister visited India during 14—16 October 2001. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

VRS to Army Officers

2453. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minsiter of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to offer VRS to army officers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when Government are going to implement the VRS for the officers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Shortage of Officers in Army

2454. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of about one-third of sanctioned strength of officers of the rank of Major, Captain and others inspite of the fact that women are being inducted in the Army;

(b) whether one of the reason for many not coming forward to join the officers cadre is laying a great emphasis on fluency of English language; and

(c) if so, whether Government would consider to do away with the language criteria?